COMICO

MAZE AGENCY 7

$2.50 U.S. $3.00 CAN.

MIKE W. BARR • GREG SHOEMAKER • BILL ANDERSON

the MAZE AGENCY®

I AM PATIENT...

I AM DIRECTED...

I AM...

GRENDEL

the Devil Inside

The perfect companion to GRENDEL: Devil's Legacy, this 80-page trade paperback recounts the slow and steady unfolding of Brian Li Sung. The vicious, senseless death of his lover plummets him into a cold, catastrophic world of paranoia and fear. GRENDEL: The Devil Inside is a critically-acclaimed tale written by Matt Wagner and illustrated by Bernie Mireault. Also features an all-new cover painting by Wagner.

$11.95 ON SALE IN JUNE FROM COMICO

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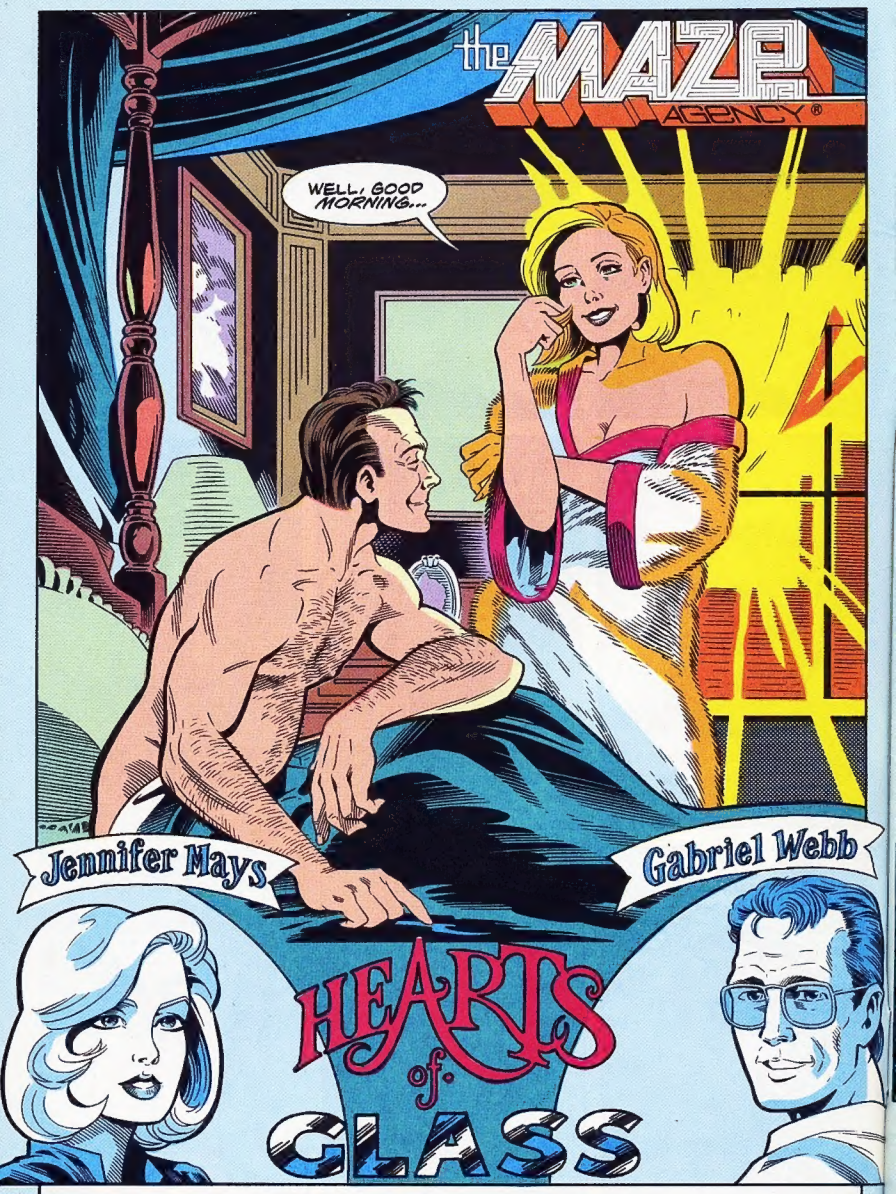
:MRRRF:
...CUT IT OUT, RALPH...
"MY, HOW QUICKLY WE FORGET...



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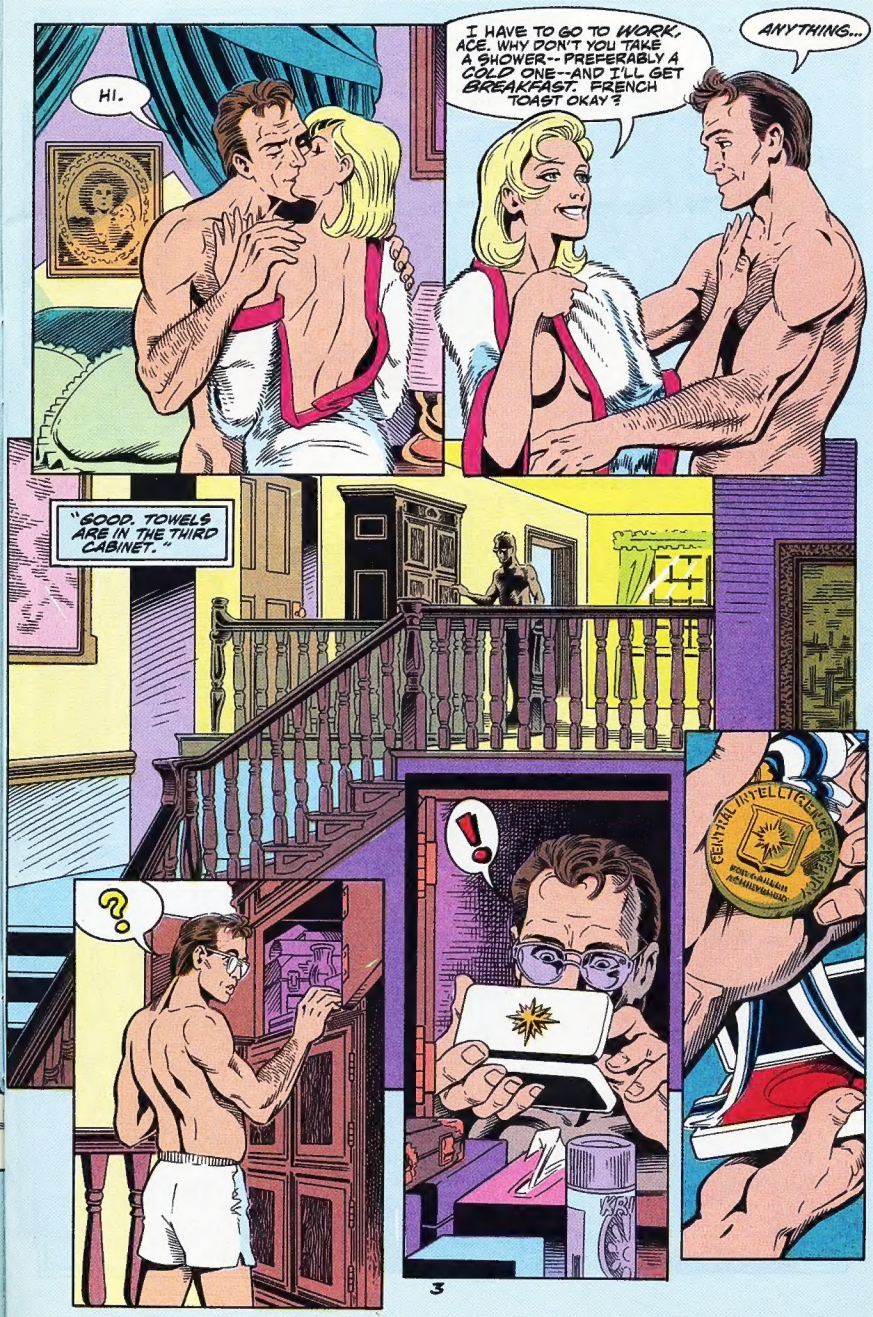
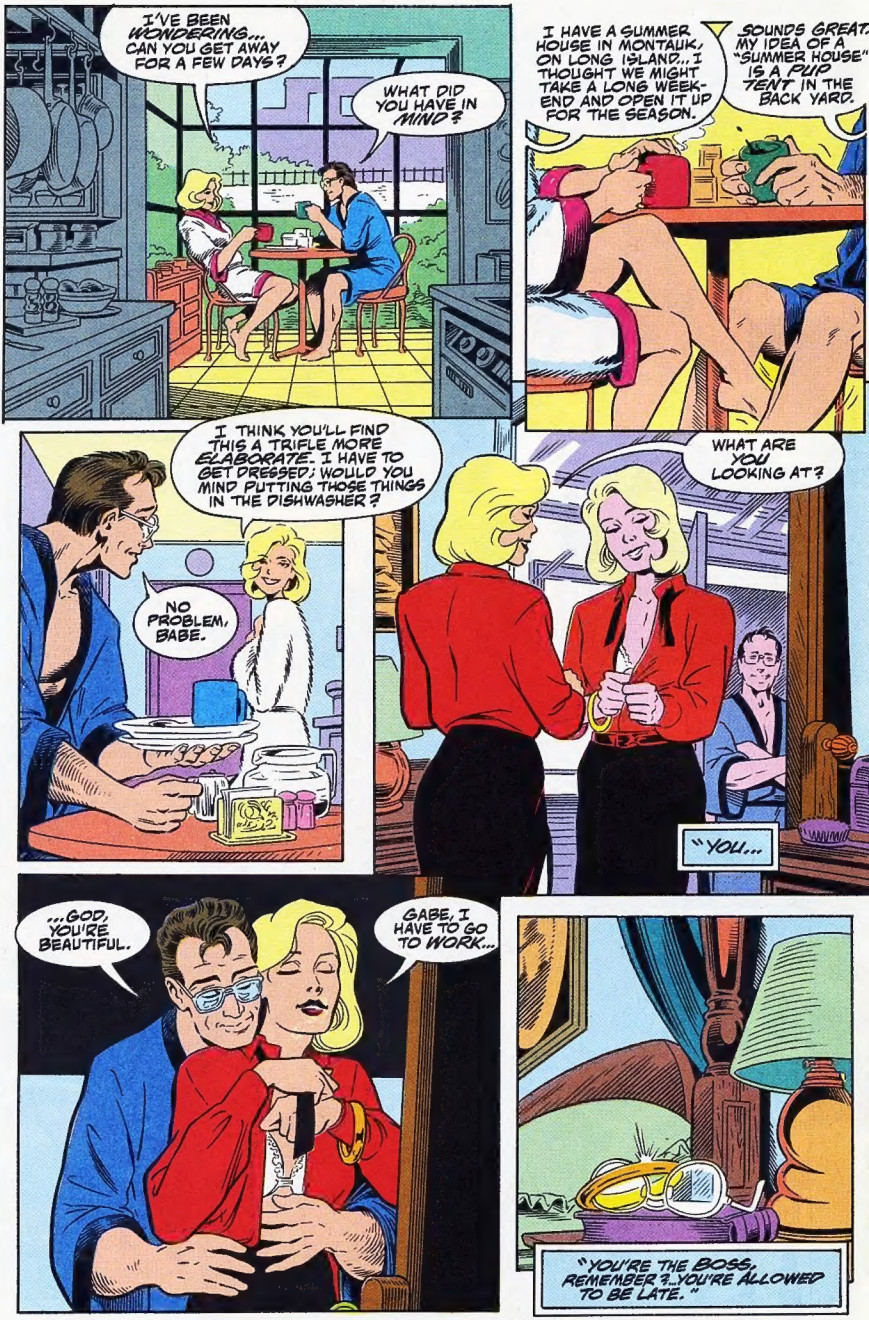
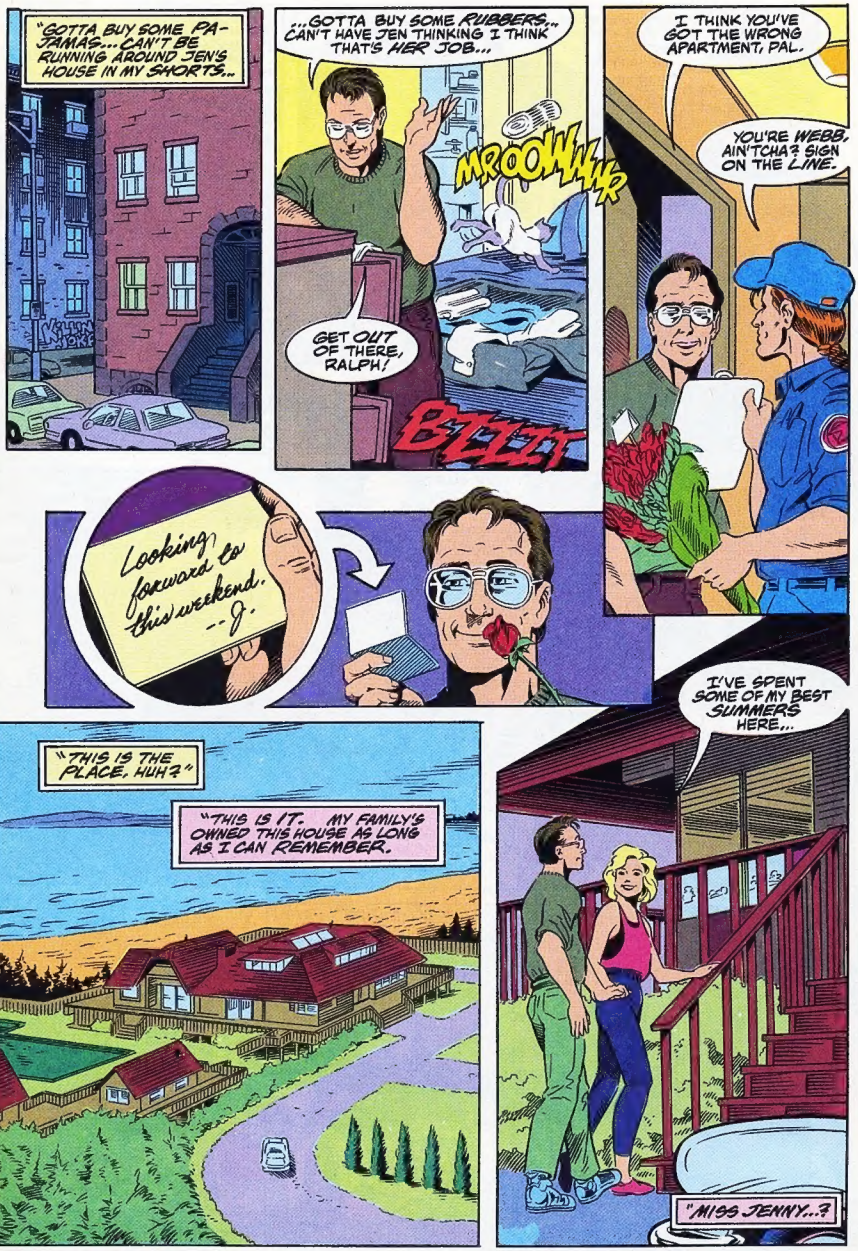
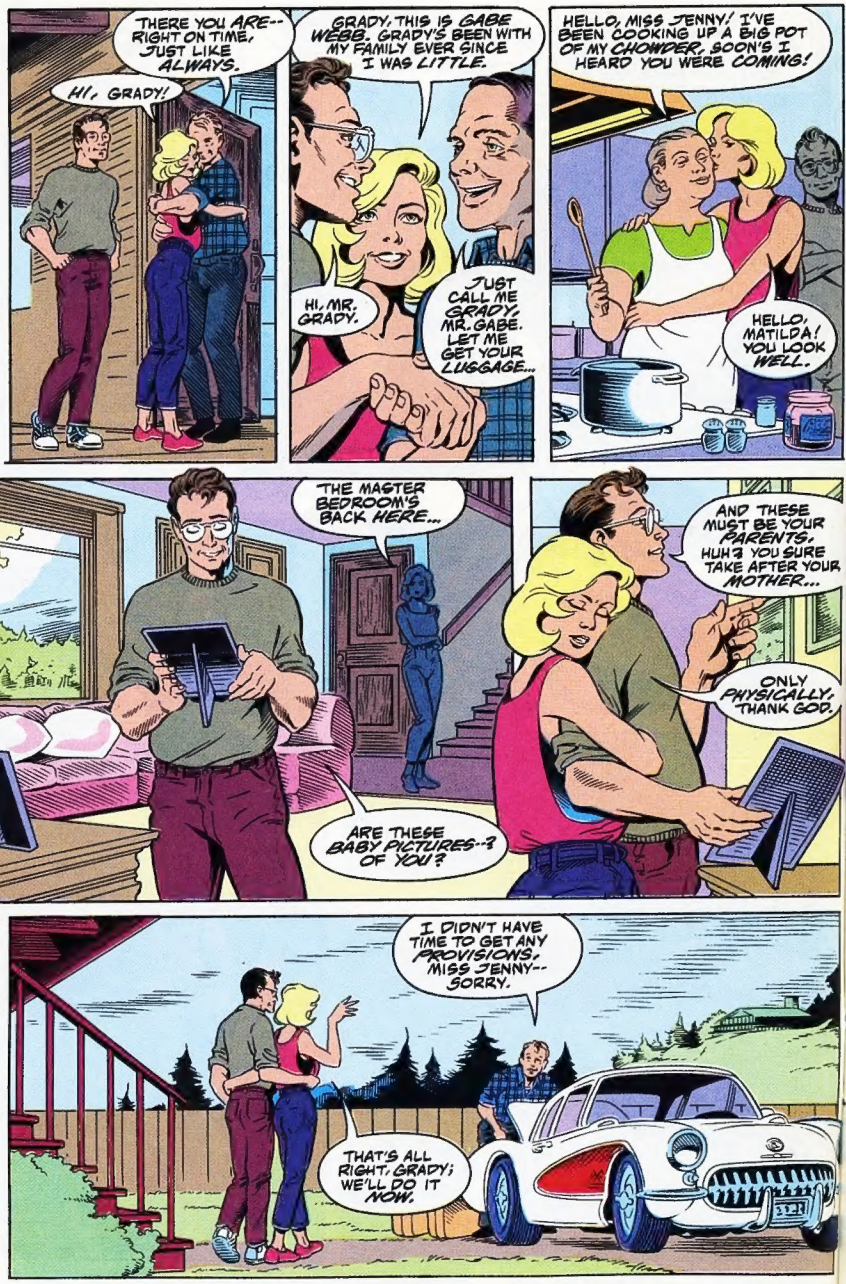
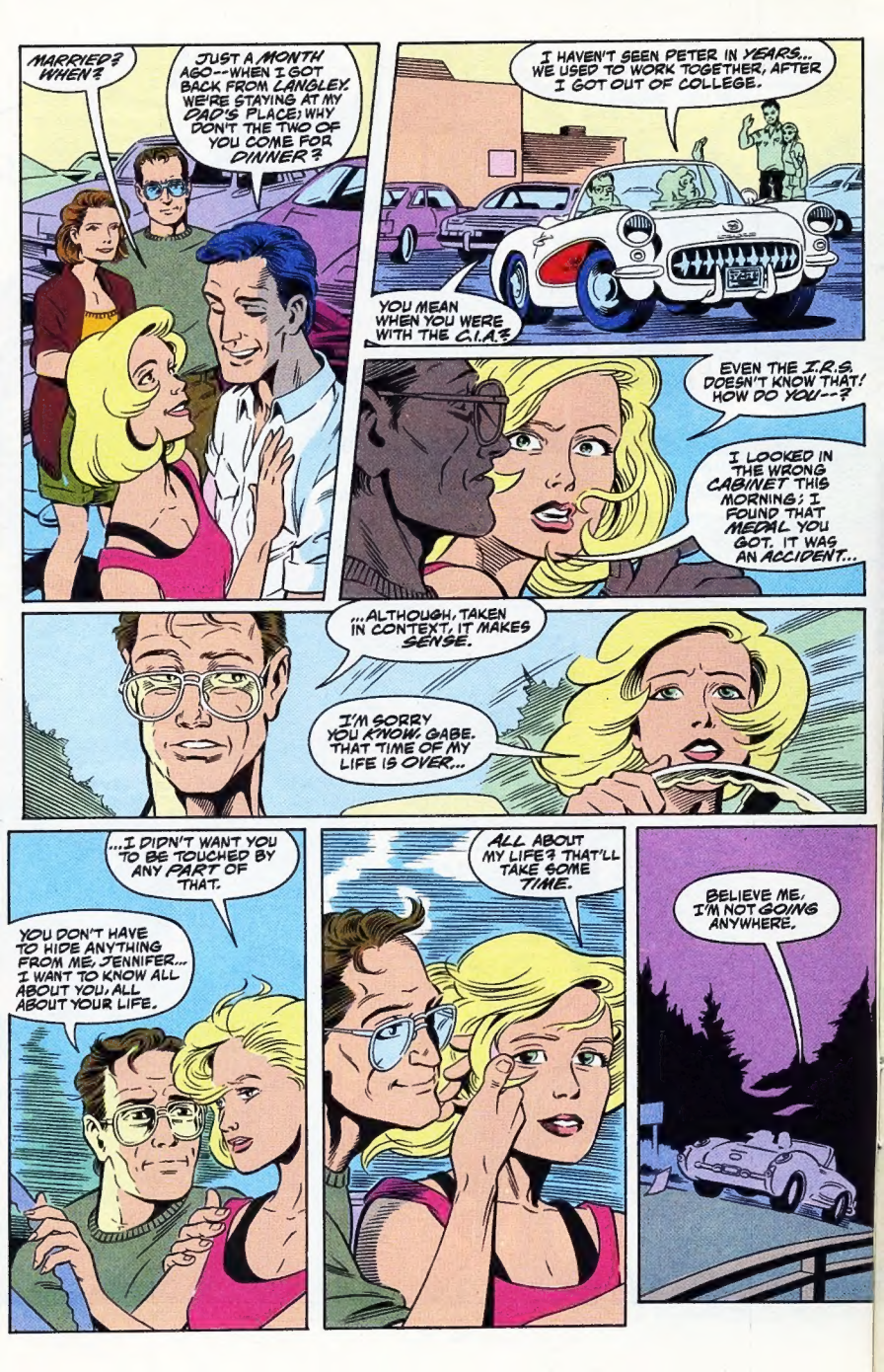

HI.
I HAVE TO GO TO WORK, ACE. WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A SHOWER--PREFERABLY A COLD ONE--AND I'LL GET BREAKFAST. FRENCH TOAST OKAY?
ANYTHING...
"GOOD. TOWELS ARE IN THE THIRD CABINET."
?
!
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

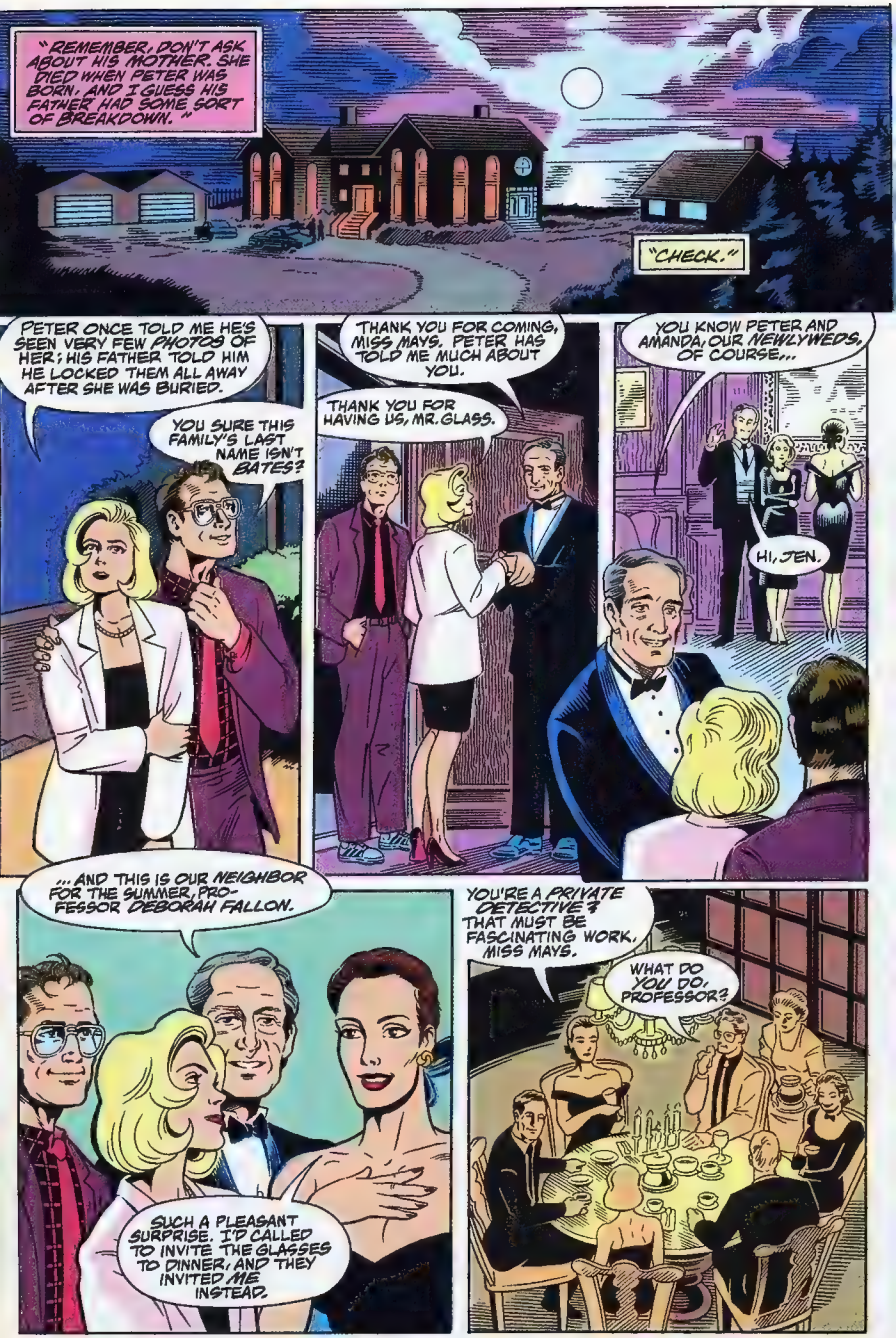

I'VE BEEN WONDERING... CAN YOU GET AWAY FOR A FEW DAYS?
WHAT DID YOU HAVE IN MIND?
I HAVE A SUMMER HOUSE IN MONTAUK, ON LONG ISLAND... I THOUGHT WE MIGHT TAKE A LONG WEEK-END AND OPEN IT UP FOR THE SEASON.
SOUNDS GREAT. MY IDEA OF A "SUMMER HOUSE" IS A PUP TENT IN THE BACK YARD.
I THINK YOU'LL FIND THIS A TRIFLE MORE ELABORATE. I HAVE TO GET DRESSED; WOULD YOU MIND PUTTING THOSE THINGS IN THE DISHWASHER?
NO PROBLEM, BABE.
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?
"YOU...
...GOD, YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL.
GABE, I HAVE TO GO TO WORK...
"YOU'RE THE BOSS, REMEMBER?..YOU'RE ALLOWED TO BE LATE."

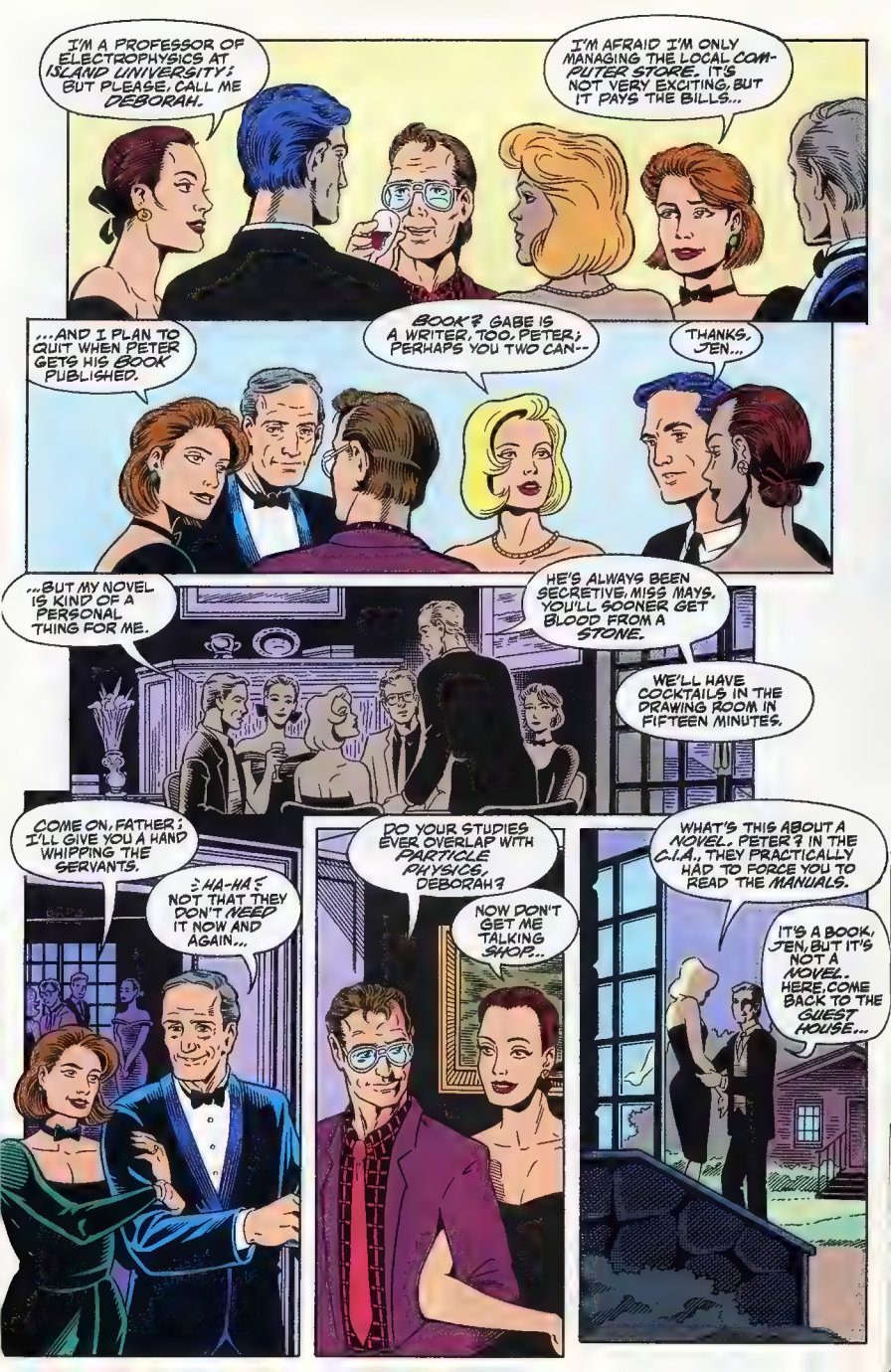

"GOTTA BUY SOME PAJAMAS... CAN'T BE RUNNING AROUND JEN'S HOUSE IN MY SHORTS...
...GOTTA BUY SOME RUBBERS... CAN'T HAVE JEN THINKING I THINK THAT'S HER JOB...
MROOWWR
GET OUT OF THERE, RALPH!
BZZZT
I THINK YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG APARTMENT, PAL.
YOU'RE WEBB, AIN'TCHA? SIGN ON THE LINE.
Looking forward to this weekend. --J.
"THIS IS THE PLACE, HUH?"
"THIS IS IT. MY FAMILY'S OWNED THIS HOUSE AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER.
I'VE SPENT SOME OF MY BEST SUMMERS HERE...
"MISS JENNY...?

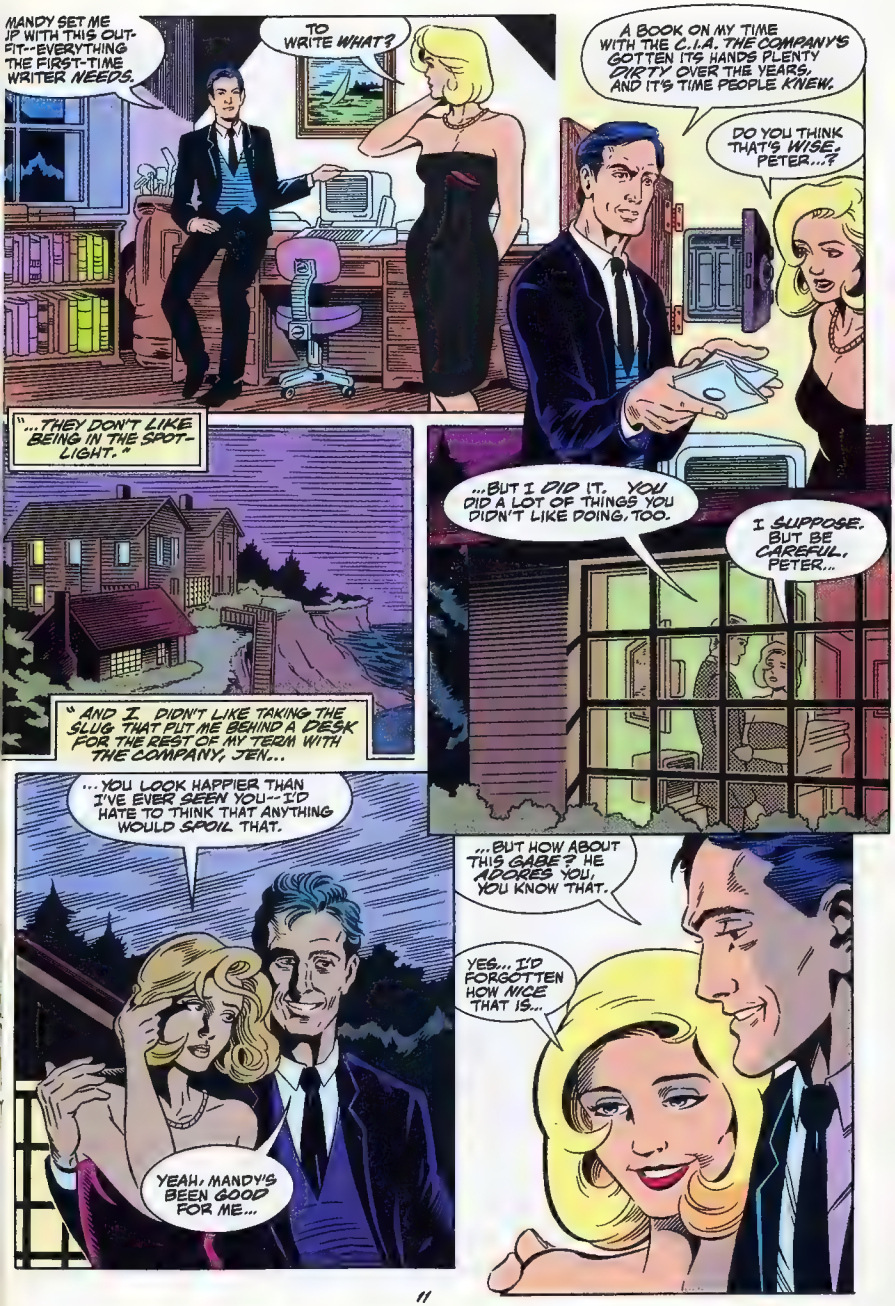

THERE YOU ARE-- RIGHT ON TIME, JUST LIKE ALWAYS.
HI, GRADY!
GRADY, THIS IS GABE WEBB. GRADY'S BEEN WITH MY FAMILY EVER SINCE I WAS LITTLE.
HI, MR. GRADY.
JUST CALL ME GRADY, MR. GABE. LET ME GET YOUR LUGGAGE...
HELLO, MISS JENNY! I'VE BEEN COOKING UP A BIG POT OF MY CHOWDER, SOON'S I HEARD YOU WERE COMING!
HELLO, MATILDA! YOU LOOK WELL.
THE MASTER BEDROOM'S BACK HERE...
ARE THESE BABY PICTURES--? OF YOU?
AND THESE MUST BE YOUR PARENTS. HUH? YOU SURE TAKE AFTER YOUR MOTHER...
ONLY PHYSICALLY, THANK GOD.
I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO GET ANY PROVISIONS, MISS JENNY-- SORRY.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, GRADY; WE'LL DO IT NOW.

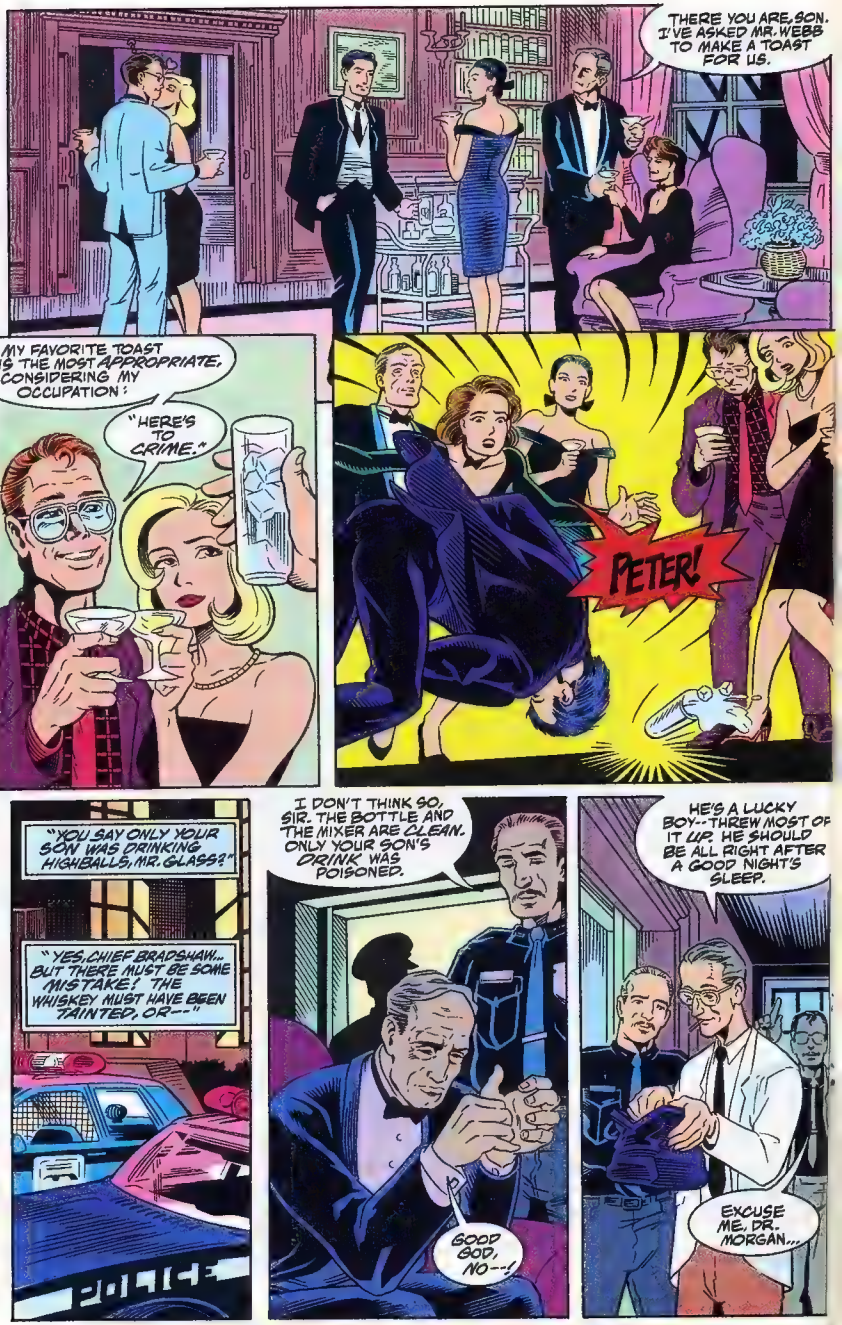
THAT LOOKED LIKE A NICE FELLOW WITH HER.
I HOPE SO... THE POOR DEAR'S HAD SUCH AWFUL LUCK WITH MEN.
MAYBE SHE NEEDS TO FIND SOMEONE WHO'LL MAKE HER SETTLE DOWN--LIKE I DID YOU.
YOU OLD FOOL. I WAS THE ONE WHO FINALLY PROPOSED TO YOU, REMEMBER?
SHOPPING CENTER
I THOUGHT "WE" WERE GONNA GET GROCERIES.
I'M HELPING...
BOB'S FINE FOOD
SAVE 12¢ LB. SEEDLESS GRAPES
GABE, WE HAVE TO GET BACK TO THE HOUSE--
I DON'T KNOW WHO "GABE" IS, BUT I'M ALREADY JEALOUS!
PETER--?
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE TOO BUSY TO MAKE INTRODUCTIONS. I'M GABE. THAT'S JENNIFER.
I'M AMANDA GLASS--PETER'S WIFE.

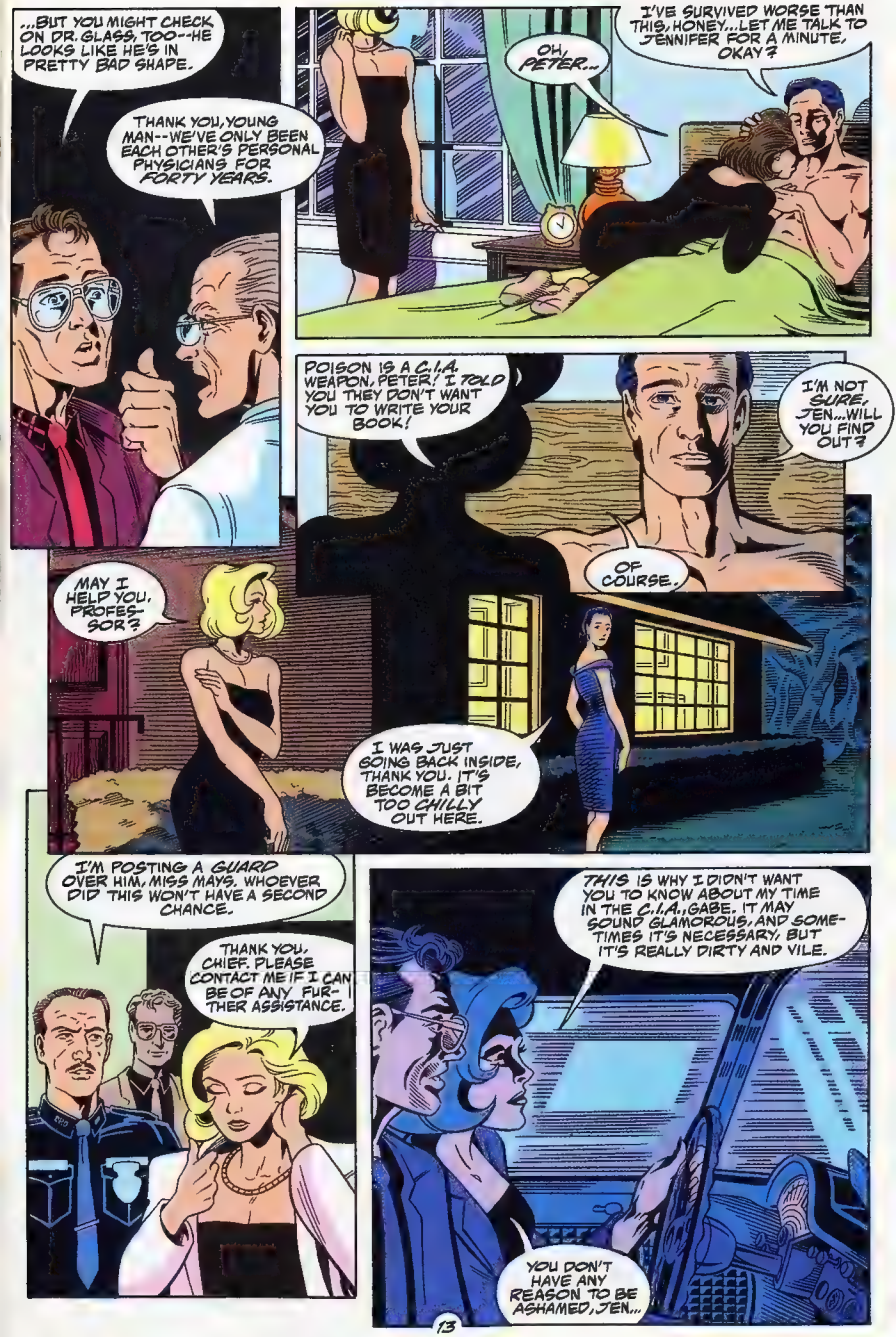

MARRIED? WHEN?
JUST A MONTH AGO--WHEN I GOT BACK FROM LANGLEY. WE'RE STAYING AT MY DAD'S PLACE; WHY DON'T THE TWO OF YOU COME FOR DINNER?
I HAVEN'T SEEN PETER IN YEARS... WE USED TO WORK TOGETHER, AFTER I GOT OUT OF COLLEGE.
YOU MEAN WHEN YOU WERE WITH THE C.I.A.?
EVEN THE I.R.S. DOESN'T KNOW THAT! HOW DO YOU--?
I LOOKED IN THE WRONG CABINET THIS MORNING; I FOUND THAT MEDAL YOU GOT. IT WAS AN ACCIDENT...
...ALTHOUGH, TAKEN IN CONTEXT, IT MAKES SENSE.
I'M SORRY YOU KNOW, GABE. THAT TIME OF MY LIFE IS OVER...
...I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO BE TOUCHED BY ANY PART OF THAT.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO HIDE ANYTHING FROM ME, JENNIFER... I WANT TO KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU, ALL ABOUT YOUR LIFE.
ALL ABOUT MY LIFE? THAT'LL TAKE SOME TIME.
BELIEVE ME, I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

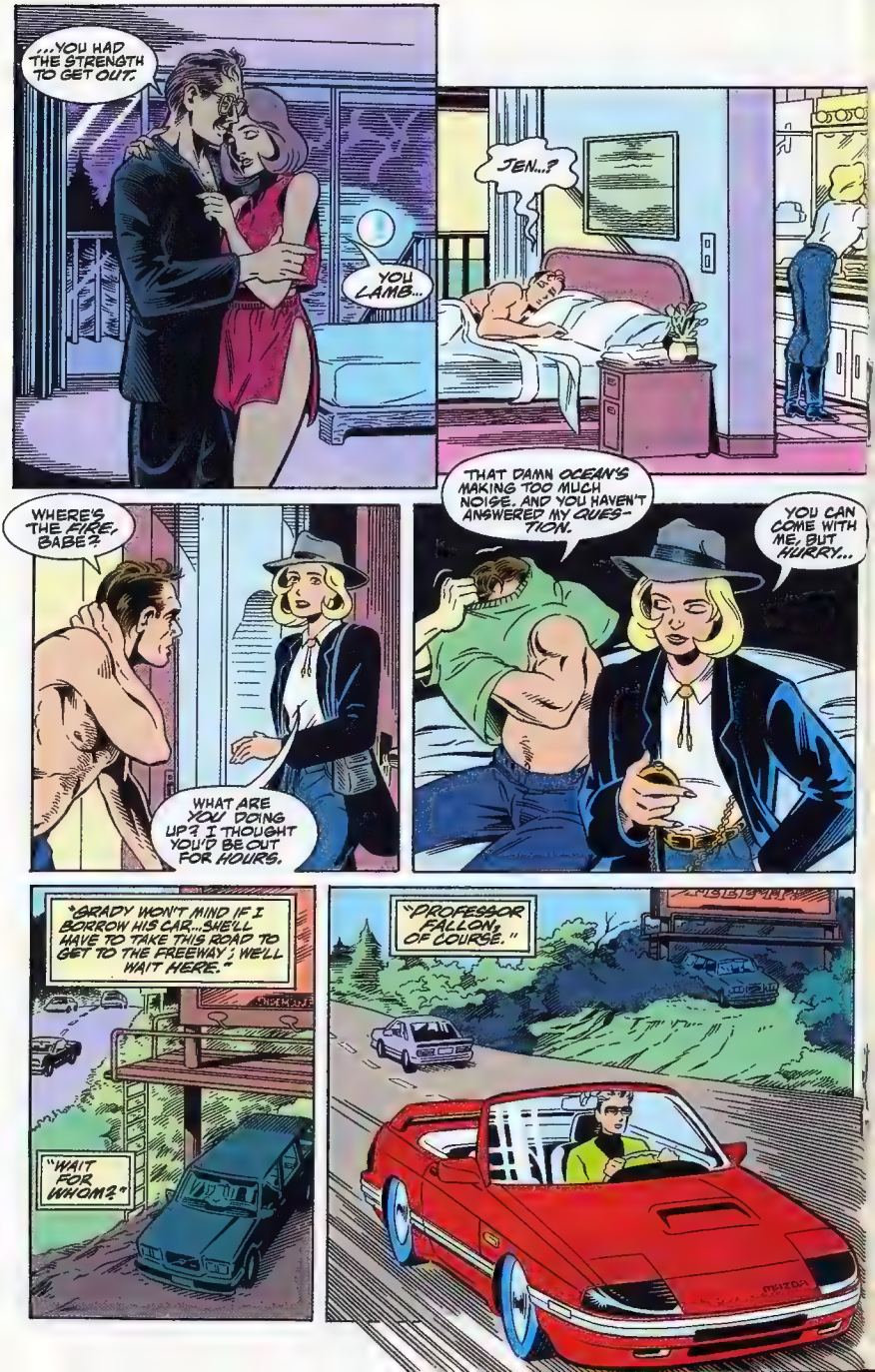

"REMEMBER, DON'T ASK ABOUT HIS MOTHER. SHE DIED WHEN PETER WAS BORN. AND I GUESS HIS FATHER HAD SOME SORT OF BREAKDOWN."
"CHECK."
PETER ONCE TOLD ME HE'S SEEN VERY FEW PHOTOS OF HER; HIS FATHER TOLD HIM HE LOCKED THEM ALL AWAY AFTER SHE WAS BURIED.
YOU SURE THIS FAMILY'S LAST NAME ISN'T BATES?
THANK YOU FOR COMING, MISS MAYS. PETER HAS TOLD ME MUCH ABOUT YOU.
THANK YOU FOR HAVING US, MR. GLASS.
YOU KNOW PETER AND AMANDA, OUR NEWLYWEDS, OF COURSE...
HI, JEN.
...AND THIS IS OUR NEIGHBOR FOR THE SUMMER, PROFESSOR DEBORAH FALLON.
SUCH A PLEASANT SURPRISE. I'D CALLED TO INVITE THE GLASSES TO DINNER, AND THEY INVITED ME INSTEAD.
YOU'RE A PRIVATE DETECTIVE? THAT MUST BE FASCINATING WORK, MISS MAYS.
WHAT DO YOU DO, PROFESSOR?


I'M A PROFESSOR OF ELECTROPHYSICS AT ISLAND UNIVERSITY; BUT PLEASE, CALL ME DEBORAH.
I'M AFRAID I'M ONLY MANAGING THE LOCAL COMPUTER STORE. IT'S NOT VERY EXCITING, BUT IT PAYS THE BILLS...
...AND I PLAN TO QUIT WHEN PETER GETS HIS BOOK PUBLISHED.
BOOK? GABE IS A WRITER, TOO, PETER; PERHAPS YOU TWO CAN--
THANKS, JEN...
...BUT MY NOVEL IS KIND OF A PERSONAL THING FOR ME.
HE'S ALWAYS BEEN SECRETIVE, MISS MAYS, YOU'LL SOONER GET BLOOD FROM A STONE.
WE'LL HAVE COCKTAILS IN THE DRAWING ROOM IN FIFTEEN MINUTES.
COME ON, FATHER; I'LL GIVE YOU A HAND WHIPPING THE SERVANTS.
:HA-HA? NOT THAT THEY DON'T NEED IT NOW AND AGAIN...
DO YOUR STUDIES EVER OVERLAP WITH PARTICLE PHYSICS, DEBORAH?
NOW DON'T GET ME TALKING SHOP...
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT A NOVEL, PETER? IN THE C.I.A., THEY PRACTICALLY HAD TO FORCE YOU TO READ THE MANUALS.
IT'S A BOOK, JEN, BUT IT'S NOT A NOVEL. HERE, COME BACK TO THE GUEST HOUSE...

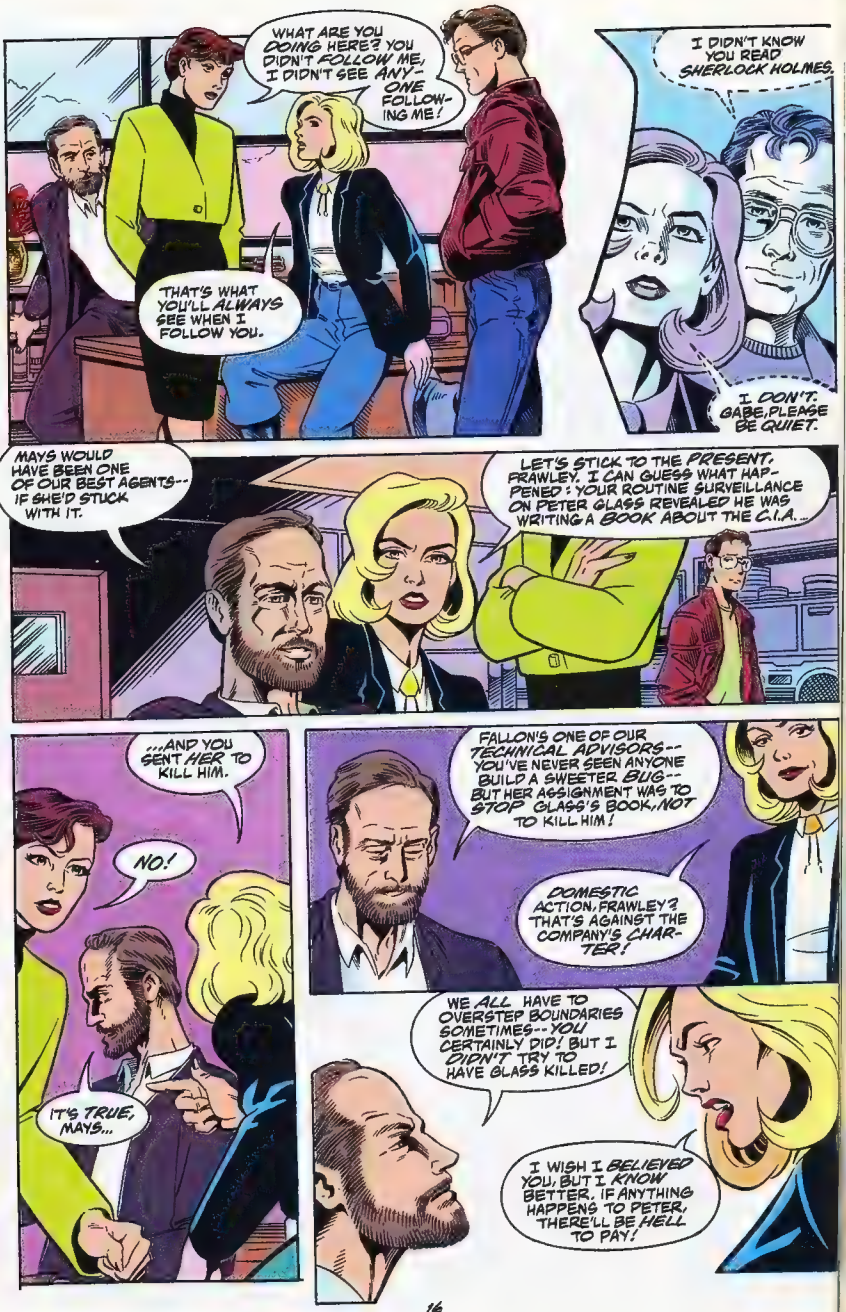

MANDY SET ME UP WITH THIS OUTFIT--EVERYTHING THE FIRST-TIME WRITER NEEDS.
TO WRITE WHAT?
A BOOK ON MY TIME WITH THE C.I.A. THE COMPANY'S GOTTEN ITS HANDS PLENTY DIRTY OVER THE YEARS, AND IT'S TIME PEOPLE KNEW.
DO YOU THINK THAT'S WISE, PETER...?
"...THEY DON'T LIKE BEING IN THE SPOTLIGHT."
"AND I DIDN'T LIKE TAKING THE SLUG THAT PUT ME BEHIND A DESK FOR THE REST OF MY TERM WITH THE COMPANY, JEN...
...BUT I DID IT. YOU DID A LOT OF THINGS YOU DIDN'T LIKE DOING, TOO.
I SUPPOSE. BUT BE CAREFUL, PETER...
...YOU LOOK HAPPIER THAN I'VE EVER SEEN YOU--I'D HATE TO THINK THAT ANYTHING WOULD SPOIL THAT.
YEAH, MANDY'S BEEN GOOD FOR ME...
...BUT HOW ABOUT THIS GABE? HE ADORES YOU, YOU KNOW THAT.
YES... I'D FORGOTTEN HOW NICE THAT IS...

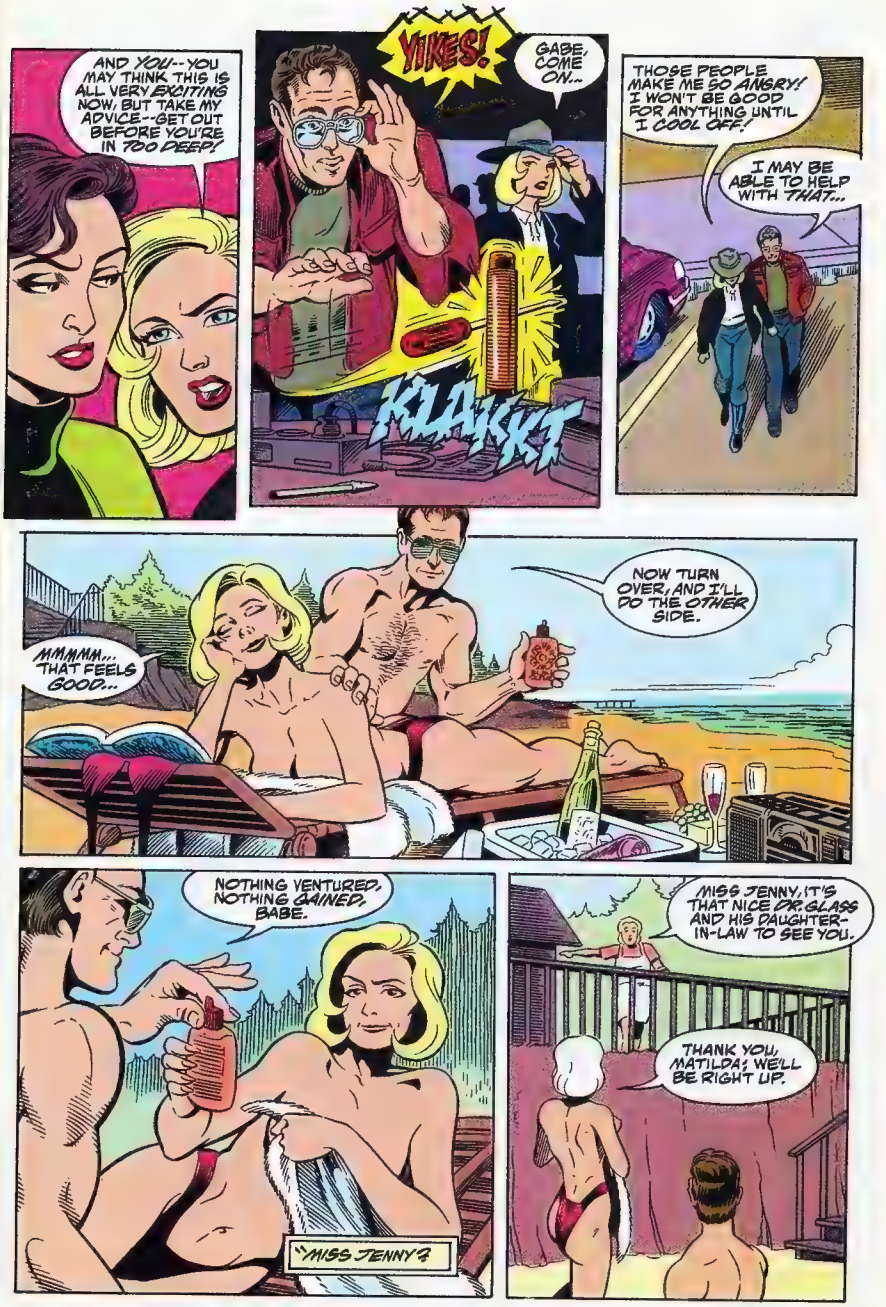

THERE YOU ARE, SON. I'VE ASKED MR. WEBB TO MAKE A TOAST FOR US.
MY FAVORITE TOAST IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE, CONSIDERING MY OCCUPATION:
"HERE'S TO CRIME."
PETER!
"YOU SAY ONLY YOUR SON WAS DRINKING HIGHBALLS, MR. GLASS?"
"YES, CHIEF BRADSHAW... BUT THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE! THE WHISKEY MUST HAVE BEEN TAINTED, OR--"
I DON'T THINK SO, SIR. THE BOTTLE AND THE MIXER ARE CLEAN. ONLY YOUR SON'S DRINK WAS POISONED.
GOOD GOD, NO--!
HE'S A LUCKY BOY--THREW MOST OF IT UP. HE SHOULD BE ALL RIGHT AFTER A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP.
EXCUSE ME, DR. MORGAN...

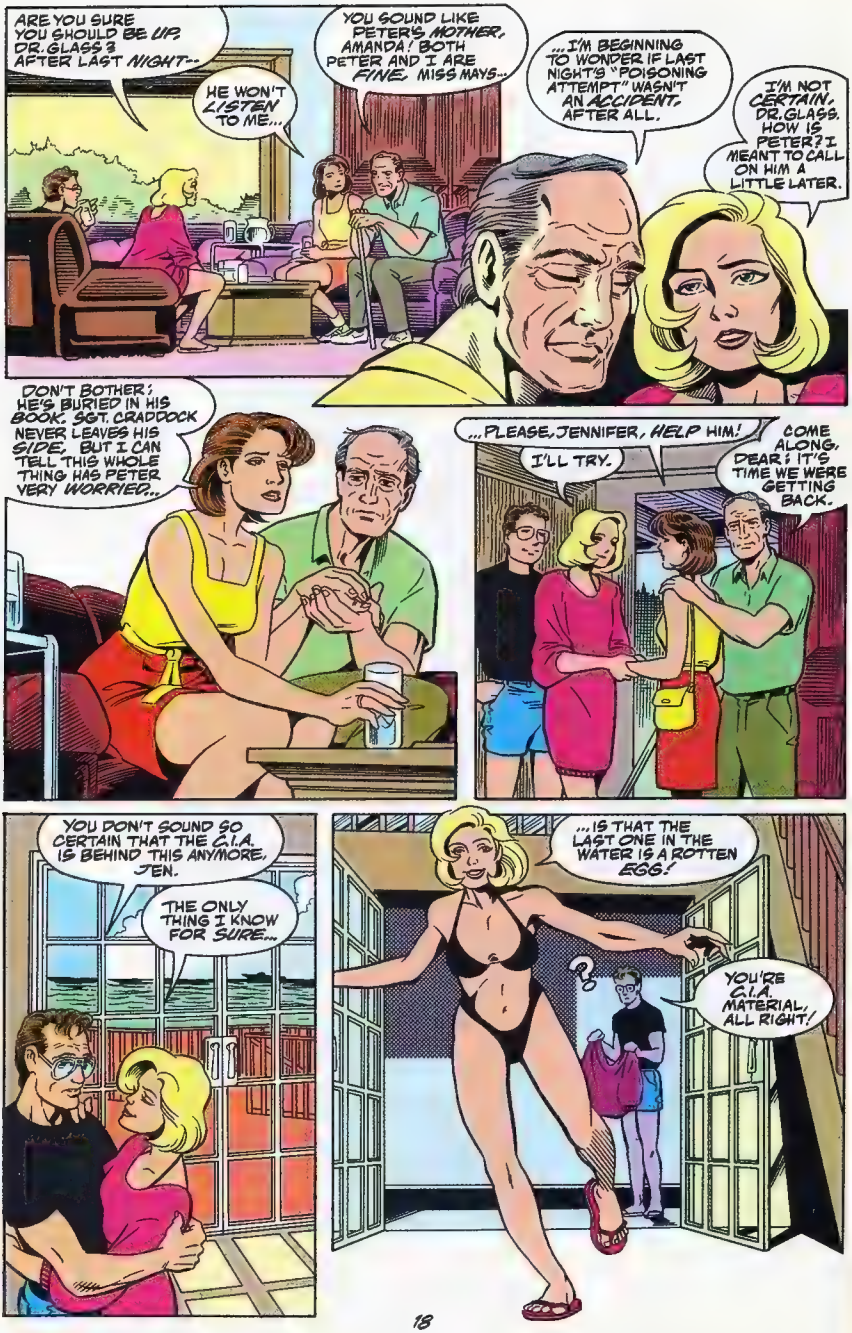

...BUT YOU MIGHT CHECK ON DR. GLASS, TOO--HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S IN PRETTY BAD SHAPE.
THANK YOU, YOUNG MAN--WE'VE ONLY BEEN EACH OTHER'S PERSONAL PHYSICIANS FOR FORTY YEARS.
OH, PETER...
I'VE SURVIVED WORSE THAN THIS, HONEY...LET ME TALK TO JENNIFER FOR A MINUTE, OKAY?
POISON IS A C.I.A. WEAPON, PETER! I TOLD YOU THEY DON'T WANT YOU TO WRITE YOUR BOOK!
I'M NOT SURE, JEN...WILL YOU FIND OUT?
OF COURSE.
MAY I HELP YOU, PROFESSOR?
I WAS JUST GOING BACK INSIDE, THANK YOU. IT'S BECOME A BIT TOO CHILLY OUT HERE.
I'M POSTING A GUARD OVER HIM, MISS MAYS. WHOEVER DID THIS WON'T HAVE A SECOND CHANCE.
THANK YOU, CHIEF. PLEASE CONTACT ME IF I CAN BE OF ANY FURTHER ASSISTANCE.
THIS IS WHY I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT MY TIME IN THE C.I.A., GABE. IT MAY SOUND GLAMOROUS, AND SOMETIMES IT'S NECESSARY, BUT IT'S REALLY DIRTY AND VILE.
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY REASON TO BE ASHAMED, JEN...

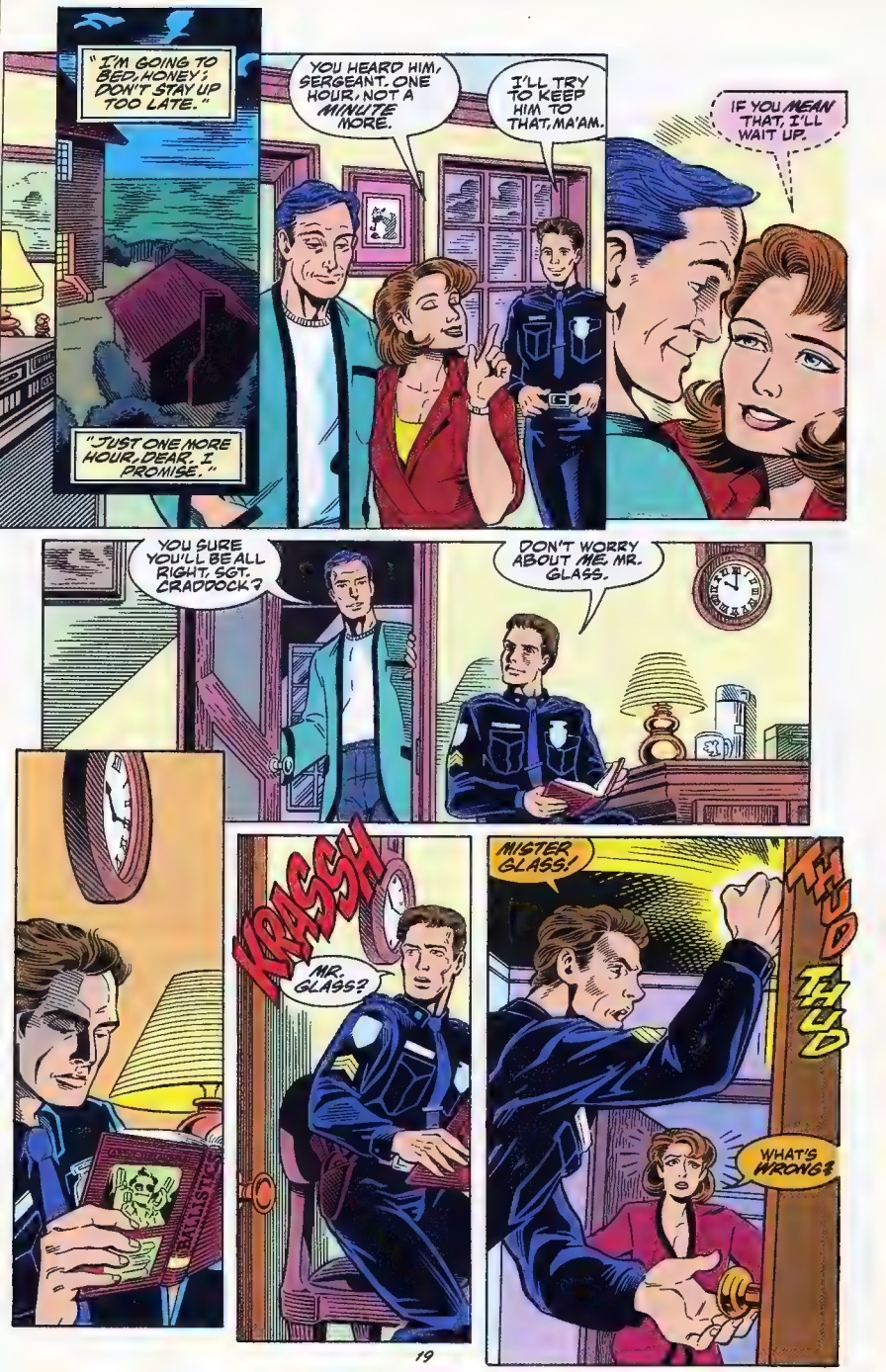

...YOU HAD THE STRENGTH TO GET OUT.
YOU LAMB...
JEN...?
WHERE'S THE FIRE, BABE?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP? I THOUGHT YOU'D BE OUT FOR HOURS.
THAT DAMN OCEAN'S MAKING TOO MUCH NOISE. AND YOU HAVEN'T ANSWERED MY QUESTION.
YOU CAN COME WITH ME, BUT HURRY...
"BRADY WON'T MIND IF I BORROW HIS CAR...SHE'LL HAVE TO TAKE THIS ROAD TO GET TO THE FREEWAY; WE'LL WAIT HERE."
"WAIT FOR WHOM?"
"PROFESSOR FALLON, OF COURSE."
MAZDA

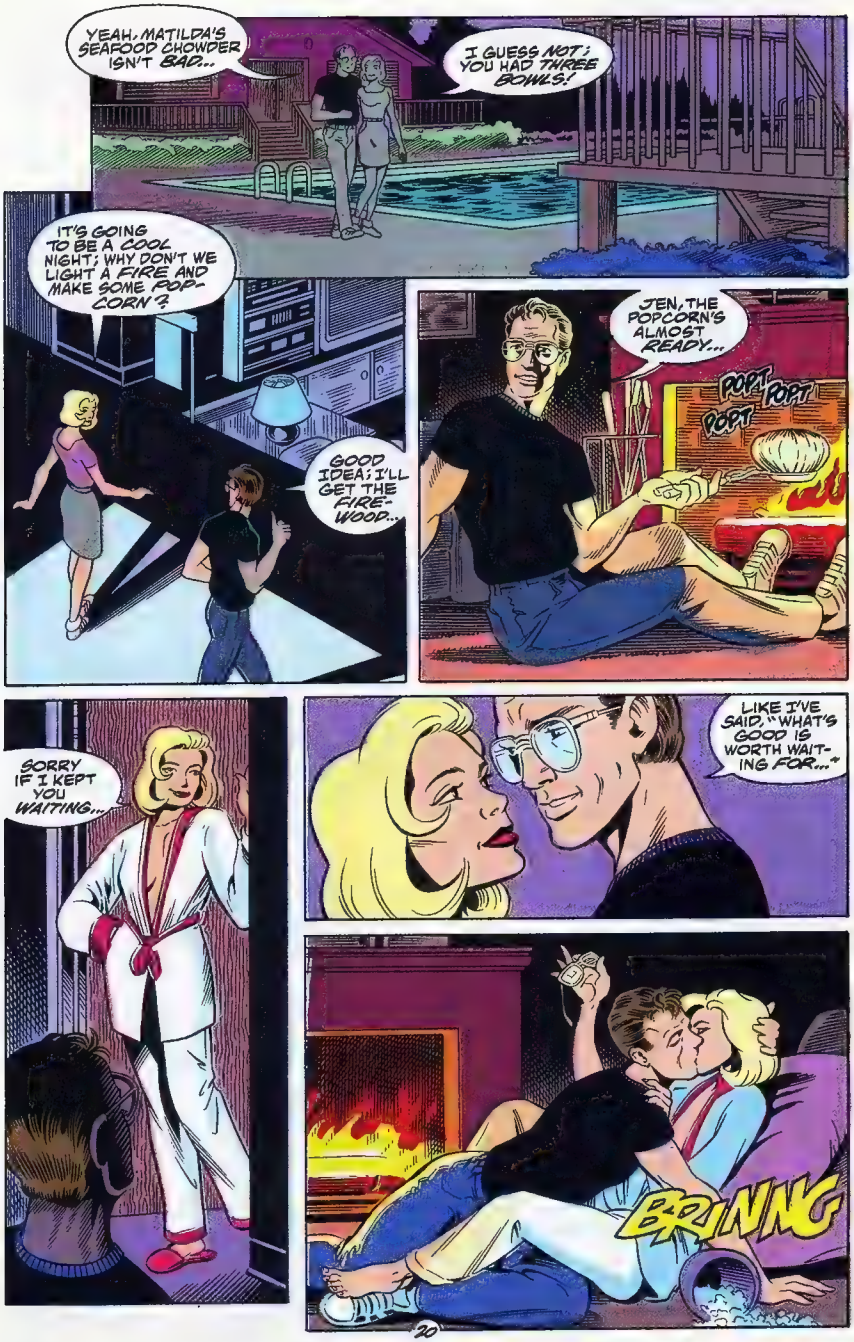
"OF COURSE"?
"WELL, OF COURSE. FALLON WAS THE ONLY UNKNOWN IN THE EQUATION...
"...AND I DIDN'T LIKE THE WAY SHE WAS ACTING. WE'LL WAIT HERE A WHILE."
ISLAND UNIVERSITY
ELECTROPHYSICS LAB
HOW DO YOU HANDLE THESE STAKEOUTS? IF I DON'T TAKE A LEAK, I'M GONNA--
JUST BE GLAD YOU'RE NOT A WOMAN; AT LEAST YOU MEN CAN USE TENNIS BALL CANS.
"MY, I NEVER EXPECTED TO SEE HIM AGAIN-- BUT IT MAKES SENSE. COME ON, ACE."
DIRECT
THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT PRESENTS SOME COMPLICATIONS WE DIDN'T COUNT ON...
"TO SAY THE LEAST, FRAWLEY!"
MAYS? WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME SHE WAS INVOLVED?
YOU KNOW HER?

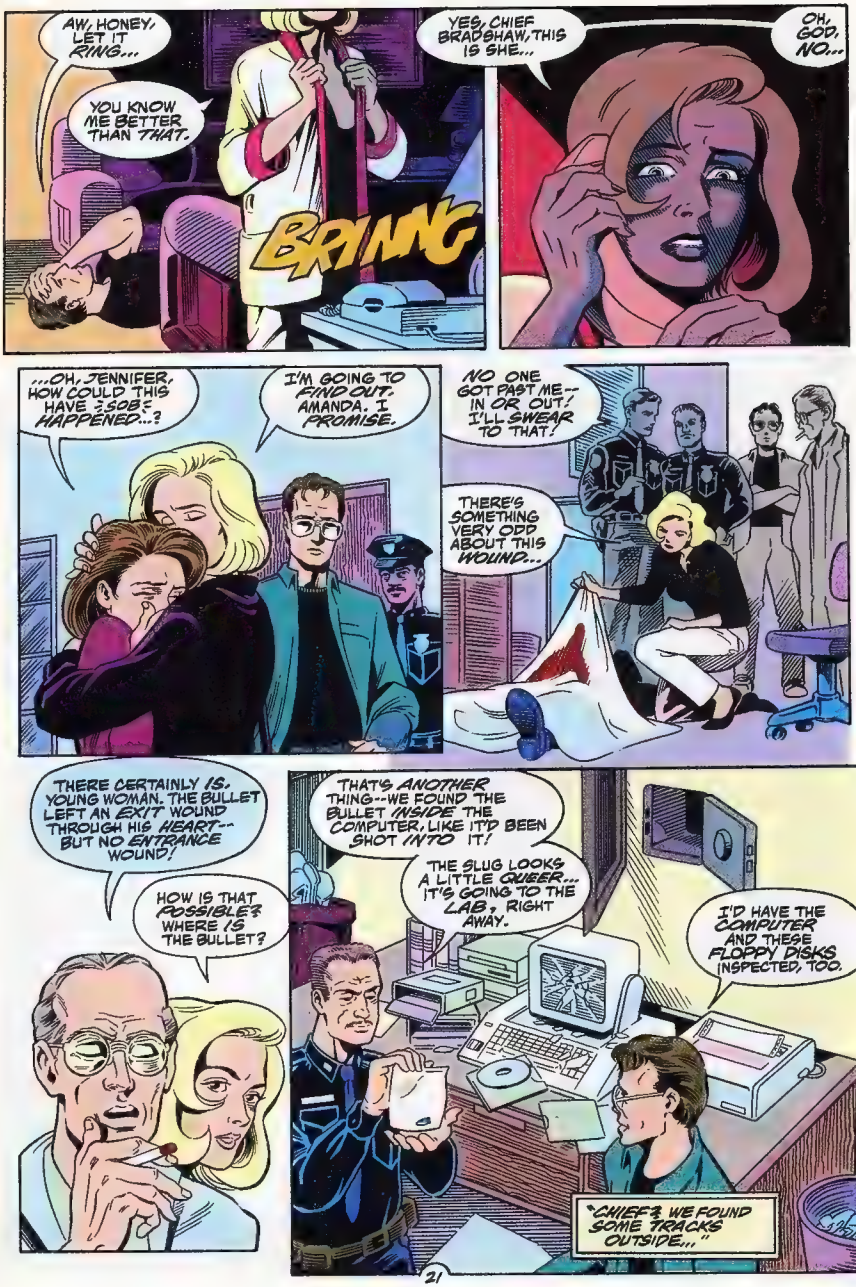

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? YOU DIDN'T FOLLOW ME, I DIDN'T SEE ANY-ONE FOLLOW-ING ME!
THAT'S WHAT YOU'LL ALWAYS SEE WHEN I FOLLOW YOU.
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU READ SHERLOCK HOLMES.
I DON'T. GABE, PLEASE BE QUIET.
MAYS WOULD HAVE BEEN ONE OF OUR BEST AGENTS-- IF SHE'D STUCK WITH IT.
LET'S STICK TO THE PRESENT, FRAWLEY. I CAN GUESS WHAT HAP-PENED: YOUR ROUTINE SURVEILLANCE ON PETER GLASS REVEALED HE WAS WRITING A BOOK ABOUT THE C.I.A...
...AND YOU SENT HER TO KILL HIM.
NO!
IT'S TRUE, MAYS...
FALLON'S ONE OF OUR TECHNICAL ADVISORS-- YOU'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE BUILD A SWEETER BUG-- BUT HER ASSIGNMENT WAS TO STOP GLASS'S BOOK, NOT TO KILL HIM!
DOMESTIC ACTION, FRAWLEY? THAT'S AGAINST THE COMPANY'S CHAR-TER!
WE ALL HAVE TO OVERSTEP BOUNDARIES SOMETIMES-- YOU CERTAINLY DID! BUT I DIDN'T TRY TO HAVE GLASS KILLED!
I WISH I BELIEVED YOU, BUT I KNOW BETTER. IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO PETER, THERE'LL BE HELL TO PAY!

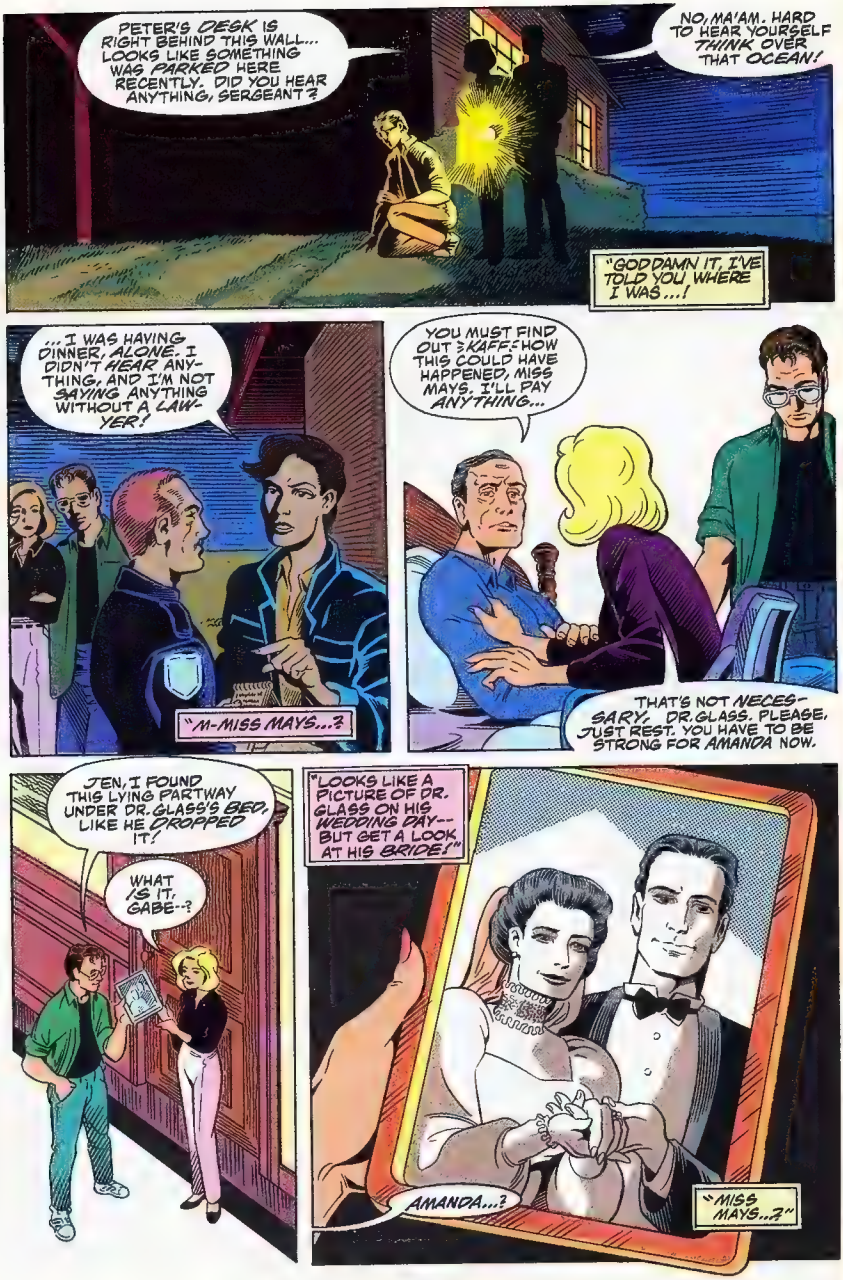

AND YOU--YOU MAY THINK THIS IS ALL VERY EXCITING NOW, BUT TAKE MY ADVICE--GET OUT BEFORE YOU'RE IN TOO DEEP!
YIKES!
GABE, COME ON...
KLAXKT
THOSE PEOPLE MAKE ME SO ANGRY! I WON'T BE GOOD FOR ANYTHING UNTIL I COOL OFF!
I MAY BE ABLE TO HELP WITH THAT...
MMMMM... THAT FEELS GOOD...
NOW TURN OVER, AND I'LL DO THE OTHER SIDE.
NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED, BABE.
"MISS JENNY?
MISS JENNY, IT'S THAT NICE DR. GLASS AND HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW TO SEE YOU.
THANK YOU, MATILDA; WE'LL BE RIGHT UP.

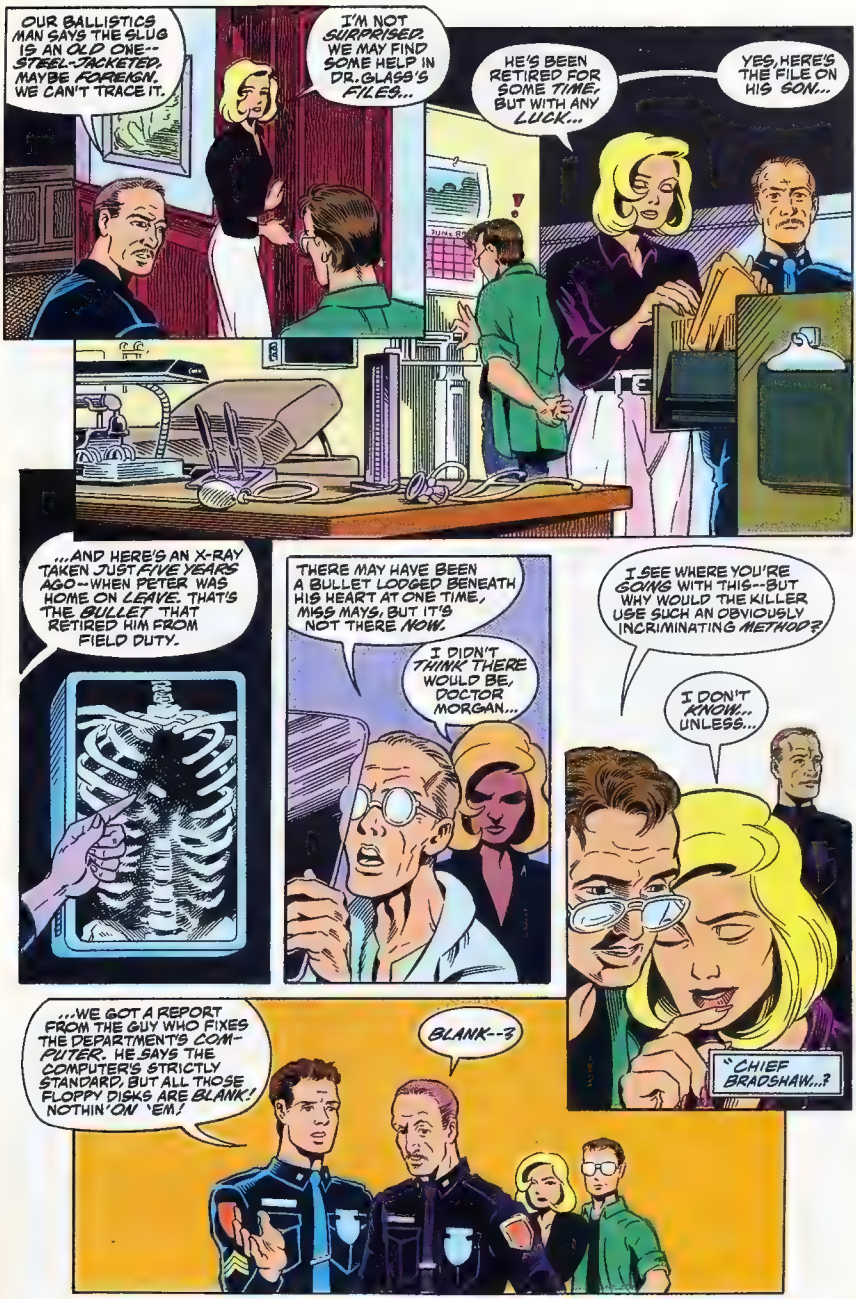

ARE YOU SURE YOU SHOULD BE UP, DR. GLASS? AFTER LAST NIGHT--
HE WON'T LISTEN TO ME...
YOU SOUND LIKE PETER'S MOTHER, AMANDA! BOTH PETER AND I ARE FINE, MISS MAYS..
...I'M BEGINNING TO WONDER IF LAST NIGHT'S "POISONING ATTEMPT" WASN'T AN ACCIDENT, AFTER ALL.
I'M NOT CERTAIN, DR. GLASS. HOW IS PETER? I MEANT TO CALL ON HIM A LITTLE LATER.
DON'T BOTHER; HE'S BURIED IN HIS BOOK. SGT. CRADDOCK NEVER LEAVES HIS SIDE. BUT I CAN TELL THIS WHOLE THING HAS PETER VERY WORRIED...
...PLEASE, JENNIFER, HELP HIM!
I'LL TRY.
COME ALONG, DEAR; IT'S TIME WE WERE GETTING BACK.
YOU DON'T SOUND SO CERTAIN THAT THE C.I.A. IS BEHIND THIS ANYMORE, JEN.
THE ONLY THING I KNOW FOR SURE...
...IS THAT THE LAST ONE IN THE WATER IS A ROTTEN EGG!
YOU'RE C.I.A. MATERIAL, ALL RIGHT.

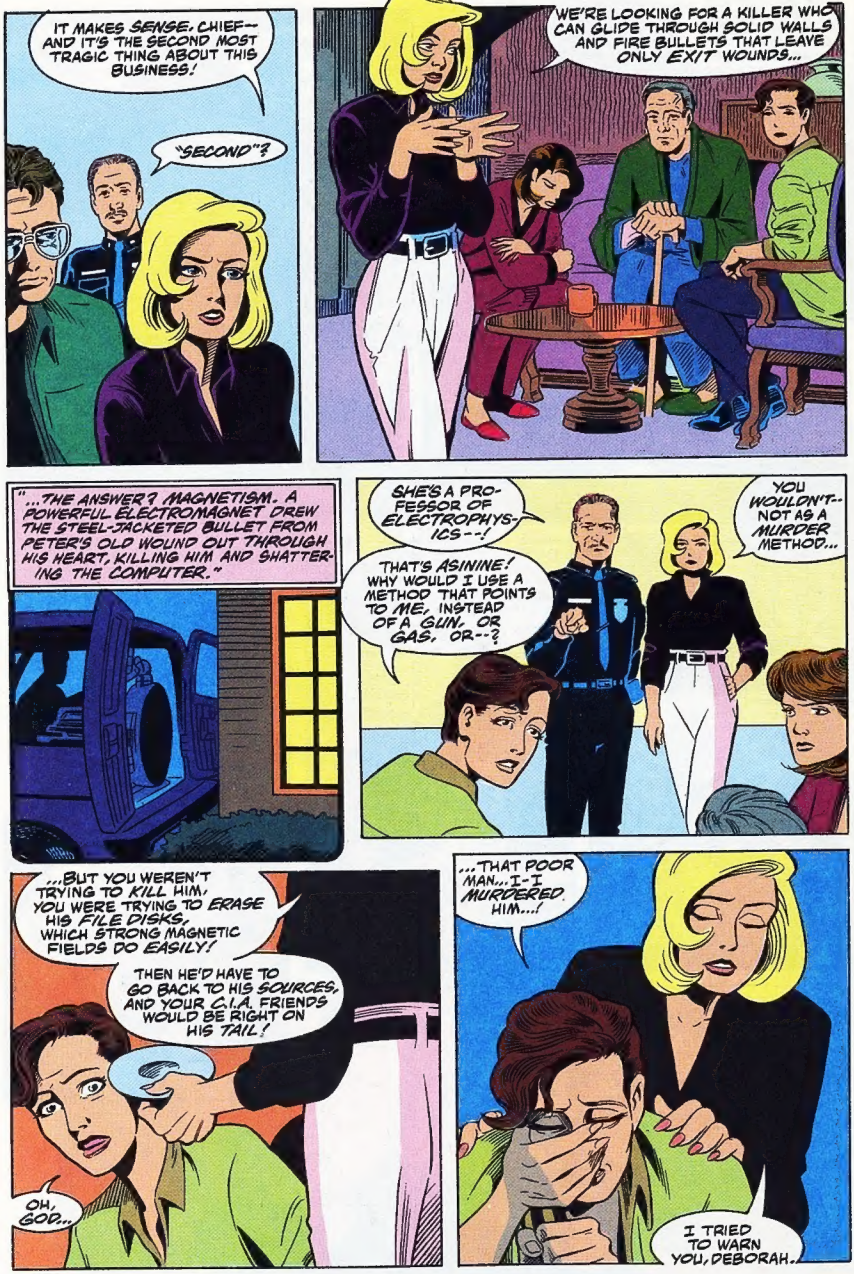

"I'M GOING TO BED, HONEY; DON'T STAY UP TOO LATE."
"JUST ONE MORE HOUR, DEAR. I PROMISE."
YOU HEARD HIM, SERGEANT. ONE HOUR. NOT A MINUTE MORE.
I'LL TRY TO KEEP HIM TO THAT, MA'AM.
IF YOU MEAN THAT, I'LL WAIT UP.
YOU SURE YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT, SGT. CRADDOCK?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, MR. GLASS.
BALLISTIC
KRASSH
MR. GLASS?
MISTER GLASS!
THUD THUD
WHAT'S WRONG?


YEAH, MATILDA'S SEAFOOD CHOWDER ISN'T BAD...
I GUESS NOT; YOU HAD THREE BOWLS!
IT'S GOING TO BE A COOL NIGHT; WHY DON'T WE LIGHT A FIRE AND MAKE SOME POP-CORN?
GOOD IDEA; I'LL GET THE FIRE-WOOD...
JEN, THE POPCORN'S ALMOST READY...
POP! POP! POP!
SORRY IF I KEPT YOU WAITING...
LIKE I'VE SAID, "WHAT'S GOOD IS WORTH WAIT-ING FOR..."
BRRINNG


AW, HONEY, LET IT RING...
YOU KNOW ME BETTER THAN THAT.
BRRING
YES, CHIEF BRADSHAW, THIS IS SHE...
OH, GOD, NO...
...OH, JENNIFER, HOW COULD THIS HAVE +SOB+ HAPPENED...?
I'M GOING TO FIND OUT, AMANDA. I PROMISE.
NO ONE GOT PAST ME--IN OR OUT! I'LL SWEAR TO THAT!
THERE'S SOMETHING VERY ODD ABOUT THIS WOUND...
THERE CERTAINLY IS, YOUNG WOMAN. THE BULLET LEFT AN EXIT WOUND THROUGH HIS HEART--BUT NO ENTRANCE WOUND!
HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE? WHERE IS THE BULLET?
THAT'S ANOTHER THING--WE FOUND THE BULLET INSIDE THE COMPUTER, LIKE IT'D BEEN SHOT INTO IT!
THE SLUG LOOKS A LITTLE QUEER... IT'S GOING TO THE LAB, RIGHT AWAY.
I'D HAVE THE COMPUTER AND THESE FLOPPY DISKS INSPECTED, TOO.
"CHIEF? WE FOUND SOME TRACKS OUTSIDE..."


PETER'S DESK IS RIGHT BEHIND THIS WALL... LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING WAS PARKED HERE RECENTLY. DID YOU HEAR ANYTHING, SERGEANT?
NO, MA'AM. HARD TO HEAR YOURSELF THINK OVER THAT OCEAN!
"GODDAMN IT, I'VE TOLD YOU WHERE I WAS...!
...I WAS HAVING DINNER, ALONE. I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING, AND I'M NOT SAYING ANYTHING WITHOUT A LAWYER!
"M-MISS MAYS...?
YOU MUST FIND OUT [illegible] HOW THIS COULD HAVE HAPPENED, MISS MAYS. I'LL PAY ANYTHING...
THAT'S NOT NECESSARY, DR. GLASS. PLEASE, JUST REST. YOU HAVE TO BE STRONG FOR AMANDA NOW.
JEN, I FOUND THIS LYING PARTWAY UNDER DR. GLASS'S BED, LIKE HE DROPPED IT!
WHAT IS IT, GABE--?
"LOOKS LIKE A PICTURE OF DR. GLASS ON HIS WEDDING DAY-- BUT GET A LOOK AT HIS BRIDE!"
AMANDA...?
"MISS MAYS...?"


OUR BALLISTICS MAN SAYS THE SLUG IS AN OLD ONE--STEEL-JACKETED. MAYBE FOREIGN. WE CAN'T TRACE IT.
I'M NOT SURPRISED. WE MAY FIND SOME HELP IN DR. GLASS'S FILES...
HE'S BEEN RETIRED FOR SOME TIME, BUT WITH ANY LUCK...
YES, HERE'S THE FILE ON HIS SON...
...AND HERE'S AN X-RAY TAKEN JUST FIVE YEARS AGO--WHEN PETER WAS HOME ON LEAVE. THAT'S THE BULLET THAT RETIRED HIM FROM FIELD DUTY.
THERE MAY HAVE BEEN A BULLET LODGED BENEATH HIS HEART AT ONE TIME, MISS MAYS, BUT IT'S NOT THERE NOW.
I DIDN'T THINK THERE WOULD BE, DOCTOR MORGAN...
I SEE WHERE YOU'RE GOING WITH THIS--BUT WHY WOULD THE KILLER USE SUCH AN OBVIOUSLY INCRIMINATING METHOD?
I DON'T KNOW... UNLESS...
"CHIEF BRADSHAW...?
...WE GOT A REPORT FROM THE GUY WHO FIXES THE DEPARTMENT'S COMPUTER. HE SAYS THE COMPUTER'S STRICTLY STANDARD, BUT ALL THOSE FLOPPY DISKS ARE BLANK! NOTHIN' ON 'EM!
BLANK--?


IT MAKES SENSE, CHIEF--AND IT'S THE SECOND MOST TRAGIC THING ABOUT THIS BUSINESS!
"SECOND"?
WE'RE LOOKING FOR A KILLER WHO CAN GLIDE THROUGH SOLID WALLS AND FIRE BULLETS THAT LEAVE ONLY EXIT WOUNDS...
"...THE ANSWER? MAGNETISM. A POWERFUL ELECTROMAGNET DREW THE STEEL-JACKETED BULLET FROM PETER'S OLD WOUND OUT THROUGH HIS HEART, KILLING HIM AND SHATTERING THE COMPUTER."
SHE'S A PROFESSOR OF ELECTROPHYSICS--!
THAT'S ASININE! WHY WOULD I USE A METHOD THAT POINTS TO ME, INSTEAD OF A GUN, OR GAS, OR--?
YOU WOULDN'T-- NOT AS A MURDER METHOD...
...BUT YOU WEREN'T TRYING TO KILL HIM, YOU WERE TRYING TO ERASE HIS FILE DISKS, WHICH STRONG MAGNETIC FIELDS DO EASILY!
THEN HE'D HAVE TO GO BACK TO HIS SOURCES, AND YOUR C.I.A. FRIENDS WOULD BE RIGHT ON HIS TAIL!
OH, GOD...
...THAT POOR MAN... I-I MURDERED HIM...!
I TRIED TO WARN YOU, DEBORAH.

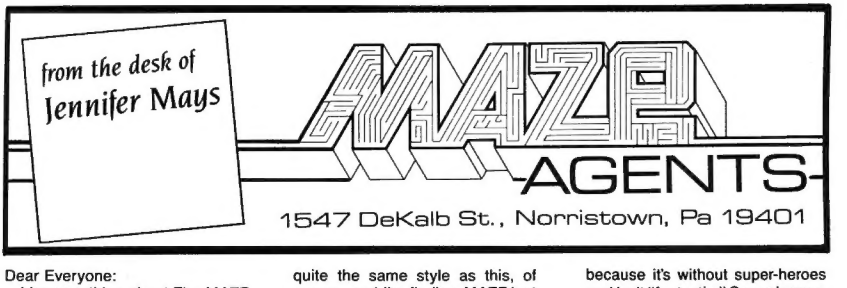
SHE KNEW WHAT SHE WAS DOING! SHE TRIED TO POISON PETER LAST NIGHT!
NO!
NO, AMANDA...
...THAT'S THE MOST TRAGIC THING ABOUT THIS BUSINESS,
THAT WOMAN... SHE LOOKS LIKE ME...!
NO, SHE'S DR. GLASS'S LATE WIFE... BUT AT LEAST FOR A WHILE, DR. GLASS COULDN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE. I'D FORGOTTEN THAT POISON IS A DOCTOR'S WEAPON, TOO!
I WAS OUT OF MY MIND... WHEN I MET AMANDA, IT WAS AS THOUGH MY DEAR ROSE HAD COME BACK TO ME...
...I POISONED PETER... BUT WHEN I SAW HIM LYING THERE, I WAS GLAD I FAILED. I TRIED TO DIVERT SUSPICION AS BEST I COULD...
GOD, MY OWN SON...
...WHAT HAVE I DONE?

JEN, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
HE LOVED HIS SON, GABE... BUT HE TRIED TO KILL HIM...
...MY PARENTS SAID THEY LOVED EACH OTHER ONCE... I THOUGHT I LOVED ARTHUR... YOU PROBABLY THINK YOU LOVE ME.
I DO.
THAT'S WHAT YOU SAY. BUT HOW DO YOU KNOW? HOW CAN ANY OF US KNOW?
I DON'T KNOW, HONEY...
...BUT I THINK IT'S SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO WANT SO MUCH YOU WON'T LET IT GO BAD... THE WAY YOU WANTED OUT OF THE C.I.A. ...
...OR THE WAY YOU WANTED THE MAZE AGENCY...
...OR THE WAY I WANT YOU.
End

from the desk of
Jennifer Mays

MAZE AGENTS

1547 DeKalb St., Norristown, Pa 19401



Dear Everyone:

I knew nothing about *The MAZE Agency* or the people behind it when I bought #1 — the wonderful cover art just caught my eye and my curiosity. When I sat down to read the book, I had absolutely no idea what to expect. I was skeptical, because the other detective-type comics I'd seen had all been disappointing. Being an avid reader and a long-time fan of detective fiction, I didn't expect to be captured or more than mildly impressed with your comics stories. I couldn't have been farther from the truth. *MAZE* has its own fresh quality of writing—totally captivating. The mysteries are clever; the treatment of clues and solutions fair to the reader; and the slow progression of the personal relationship between Jennifer Mays and Gabe Webb is not only satisfying, it almost seems a pity to know that someday they will have to "get closer."

The art in *MAZE* is so professional, so clear, and so demanding of respect, I handle my *MAZE* copies with greater care and delicacy than even the most valuable comics in my collection.

I'm going to have to pick up duplicate copies of the first few issues and start buying two at a time in the future. It's a sure thing that *MAZE* will be a valuable collector's item in the not-too-distant future, and I plan to be prepared.

MAZE junkie,
Roxanne L. Smith
Garden Grove, CA

— Reader Smith has a "Jones" for *The MAZE Agency*, eh? Thanks for your support, Roxanne, and please see our special announcement later.

Dear Mike,

The MAZE Agency #4 ("The Return of Jack the Ripper...?") was a classical mystery, a great detective story, and the best Hughes/Magyar contribution yet; in short, everything you could want from a book like this. This remains a genre underused in comics for the past 30 years. I love *Ms. Tree*, which isn't quite the same style as this, of course, and I'm finding *MAZE* just as good. I find I'm picking up on the clues you deliberately leave hanging, such as the direction the throats were slashed on the unfortunate victims of the Ripper-style attacks. I'm not making a conscious effort to spot the killer, though, preferring to let the story run its course and allow Gabe and Jen to reveal whodunit.

This makes it all the more of a pity that Comico is about to cancel most of its line. I believe *MAZE #7* will be the last issue from them. I'm sure that *MAZE* is good enough to find an alternative home, so I'm not too worried about not seeing it again. But I wish you luck in finding a new home. Let us know!

Malcolm Bourne
Manchester, England

LASTSTORY

It's true; for the time being, this issue of *The MAZE Agency* will be the last to be published. You don't have to be Sherlock Holmes, let alone Jennifer Mays or Gabriel Webb, to figure out why: it's a combination of lower-than-expected sales and some severe financial reverses on the part of our publisher, Comico.

I sat down to write this column in a really bitter frame of mind, and originally intended to make it a jeremiad about the current state of the market, underscored by frequent references to H.L. Mencken's invaluable dictum: "Nobody ever lost money underestimating the intelligence of the American public."

Then I realized that wasn't at all the way I wanted *MAZE* to go out.

You see, the second coolest thing about creator ownership is that the book can be taken elsewhere. (The first is that it exists.) I'm currently talking to several other publishers about *MAZE*, and while I don't want to raise any false hopes (including my own), I will say — cautiously! — that I don't think any of us have seen the last of *MAZE* just yet. Watch the skies.

Some say *MAZE* didn't sell well because it's without super-heroes and isn't "fantastic." Super-heroes, no; no characters who have supernatural abilities given to them by fate, just two people who have developed their own abilities to the utmost. In short, "just" heroes. And if a world where romance and justice flourish isn't fantastic, then I don't know what is.

Now come the thank-yous to everyone who helped make *The MAZE Agency* the high point of my entire professional and creative experience, beginning with all the readers and critics who understood what we were trying to do and helped. Bob Schreck, Diana Schutz, Rick Taylor ("Squirt!"), and Dennis and Phil LaSorda, thanks. Ditto to the Comico staffers who don't get their names in the masthead, but who are invaluable nonetheless. (You know who you all are. I don't.)

Thanks to the many talented artists I've had the good fortune to work with: Al Vey, Joe Staton, Rich Rankin, Greg Shoemaker, Bill Anderson, and Los Bros Pander, with a special commendation to Robb Phipps. A grateful tip of the deerstalker to Julia Lacquement, Deborah Marks, Dan McKinnon, and Tom Addis. Adam Hughes deserves special mention here. It's been one of the most profound delights of my career to see him grow from issue to issue, and to become one of the business's most sought-after talents. Adam is going on to bigger things, becoming the regular penciller on DC's *Justice League America*, which certainly ought to make the three issues we've got pencilled by him in the drawer easier to sell. Best of luck, Adam, and to all the *MAZE* artists.

And, bringing up the rear, Michael Eury, editor; and especially Rick Magyar, "the world's most dangerous inker." Gracias, compadres.

Happy trails, everyone. I won't say good-bye.

— Mike W. Barr

"So we just count our blessings and fade out."

— Ellery Queen, *Cop Out*, 1969